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# Strindberg Earns NPS Honor

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# Strindberg Earns NPS Honor

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As a doctoral student at St. Andrews University in Scotland, Anders Strindberg visited the Middle East to study Arabic.

"I was bitten by the field research bug," Strindberg said. "While I was there I noticed that so many of our assumptions about the region and how politics and religion work together did not track with reality."

That set Strindberg on a path of researching, writing and teaching about the dynamics of the region, which led him to a faculty position at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security. That, in turn, has led to an accolade: Strindberg was honored during graduation ceremonies on March 25 with the Lieutenant Commander David L. Williams Outstanding Professor Award.

The award is presented to the faculty member of the School of International Graduate Studies who has demonstrated the greatest dedication to the learning and intellectual growth of students, in residence and abroad, and through that dedication has had the greatest impact on the individual students and the course as a whole. The award is named in memory of Lieutenant Commander David L. Williams (USN), a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus killed in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on September 11.

"The award, named for Commander Williams, is a reminder of what our work is about and why we are engaged in homeland security," Strindberg said. "It's an honor to be acknowledged as having contributed to homeland security in a very direct way."

Strindberg has taught at CHDS since 2007. Previously, he had worked as a professor, consultant and journalist, including six years as Special Correspondent for "Jane's Intelligence Review."

His academic areas of interest seem as if taken from today's headlines, with expertise in Islamism and Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese and Bahraini politics, among other topics. He believes that the street protests erupting across northern Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula are the result of years of dissatisfaction among the population.

"This is decades of pent up frustration with the lack of democracy and accountability," Strindberg observed. "The

entire regional state system is so brittle that what began as the protest of one man in Tunisia has cascaded throughout the region at an astonishing pace. I don't think anyone could foresee this happening so fast."

Moreover, he suggests that these protests have already brought about a sense of democratic empowerment that could further marginalize the agendas of radical transnational Islamist groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates.

"The main organizers in almost every country where these developments have taken place are committed to democratic agendas," Strindberg observed. "In terms of combating al-Qaida, this has dealt a body blow to that organization, since one of its main sources of support and sympathy has been the regional order itself."

Strindberg said U.S. policy should be grounded in consistency when responding to the developments in those various nations.

"Clearly, we can see from the way in which these revolutions have cascaded that they are regionally connected on some level, even if they are taking place in separate countries," he said. "So, we really need to think about policy cohesion in terms of the US response on a regional level."

These current events are certain to make for fresh subject material as Strindberg teaches at CHDS, a school he said is like no other.

"It is without a shadow of a doubt the most stimulating work environment I have ever been in," he said of the Center. "This is a more applied version of academia than at most other schools. As a faculty member, one is able to teach, but also being taught directly by students. Any award that any of us receives is a reflection of the quality of students that we have. We improve with every cohort because we learn from them about what is useful in this melding of academic knowledge and practical challenges."

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